

State Grange began in 1889

Washington State Grange came into being in Camas on Tuesday, Sept. 10, 1889, the year of statehood.

All day Monday, delegates and visiting Grangers had arrived from far parts of the country by wagon with blankets and crocks of food for a week's stay. They pitched their tents in the yards of their friends, put up with kinfolk or camped about the town like one big family on a picnic.

Some hundred or more met in the lodge hall above old Aeneas MacMaster's store at Third and Columbia, now part of the mill. (The machine shop now stands on the spot.)

Highlights of the convention included the election of D.L. Russell of Washougal as first master; J.O. Wing as overseer and James Nevins as lecturer. H.E. Hayes of the Oregon State Grange installed the new officers at a public ceremony.

C.J. Moore of Mt. Pleasant Grange was appointed chairman of the credentials committee and was among the most prolific authors of resolutions.

The State Grange, older than the state of Washington by about two months, opposed the original draft of the state constitution, complaining that "it provides for more

offices than the public service requires and also makes provision for the creation of offices by the courts that are uncalled for and unnecessary.

"The salaries are too high ... it is calculated to encourage extravagance ... and thus to grievously burden an overtaxed people."

These pioneer Grangers not only talked economy but practiced it. To pay the expense of the organization of the State Grange a collection was taken up. "The Grange responded very liberally by contributing the sum of \$10.50," the minutes of this first meeting read.